

## CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (currently amended) An apparatus, A Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) network interface, comprising:

a first network interface coupled to service packetized communications that communicates with at least one Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) VoIP terminal within a first network; ~~to service packetized communications;~~

a second backbone network interface ~~communicatively coupled to the network interface~~ to service the packetized communications via a second network; and

a processor processing unit ~~communicatively coupled to the first network interface and to the second backbone network interface; and~~

a programmable codec, coupled to the processor, that employs a corresponding coding scheme to encode or decode each of the packetized communications; and wherein:

~~whereby the processor processing unit determines a communication signature for each of the packetized communications; and~~

~~whereby the processor processing unit determines, based upon a corresponding communication signature, whether a packetized communication is a real-time communication;~~

when the packetized communication is the real-time communication, the processor monitors a service level at which the real-time communication is currently supported within at least one of the first network and the second network; and

when the service level is below a minimal service level, the programmable codec changes a coding scheme by which the real-time communication is encoded or decoded therein.

2. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP network interface of Claim 1, ~~whereby the processor directs the network interface and the backbone interface to provide a minimal service level to the real-time communication~~ wherein:

the programmable codec employs a first coding scheme to encode or decode a first packetized communication of the packetized communications; and

the programmable codec employs a second coding scheme to encode or decode a second packetized communication of the packetized communications.

3. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP network interface of Claim 1, 2, wherein:

the processor determines, based upon a corresponding communication signature, whether a packetized communication is a non real-time communication; and in providing the a minimal service level to the real-time communication, when a non real-time communication is identified, its and their service level is adjusted levels are reduced to be relatively lower than a service level of the real-time communication.

4. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP network interface of Claim 1, 2, wherein:

the second network includes a first servicing network and a second servicing network; and

if a the service level at which the real-time communication may be supported when communicated via the first servicing network is below the minimal minimum service level, to the real-time communication cannot be met, the processor that the real-time communication is be rerouted via the second another servicing network.

5. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP network interface of Claim 1, wherein the processor prioritizes the real-time communication over non real-time communication communications.

6. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP network interface of Claim 1, wherein each packetized communication has associated therewith a pair of communication signatures that includes signatures; a receive signature corresponding to communications received from a corresponding VoIP terminal via the first network interface and a transmit signature corresponding to communications received via the second network backbone interface and intended for the corresponding VoIP terminal.

7. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP-network interface of Claim 6, wherein ~~whereby~~ the receive signature is primarily employed to determine whether the packetized communication is the ~~a~~ real-time communication.

8. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP-network interface of Claim 6, wherein the receive signature indicates a problem with the apparatus VoIP-network interface.

9. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP-network interface of Claim 6, wherein the transmit signature indicates a problem with communications within the second network ~~other links of communication path~~.

10. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP-network interface of Claim 1, wherein the ~~real-time~~ packetized communication is an audio communication.

11. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP-network interface of Claim 1, wherein the packetized communication ~~communications~~ is an audio-visual ~~audiovisual~~ communication.

12. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP-network interface of claim 11, wherein the audio-visual ~~audiovisual~~ communication is a video conferencing communication.

13-48. (canceled).